

News and views

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Czech Society of Nuclear Medicine XXXVIII Days of Nuclear Medicine and Telemedicine, Zlin, April 18th–20th, 2001

This Congress took place in the Academia Centrum of the Tomáš Bata University of Zlin, Czech Republic, with delegates and guests from Canada, Croatia, Poland, Slovakia and the USA.

Proceedings were carried on in two or three parallel sessions — in total there were more than 78 oral and 36 poster presentations, including a programme workshop on current problems in nuclear medicine, led by Doc. Myslivecek from Olomouc, and a lecture on radioguided surgery by Prof. Cox from Tampa (USA).

The author has always had a very high opinion of Czech nuclear medicine and this Congress confirmed this opinion. This is a large nuclear medicine community, fourfold stronger *per capita* than Poland. This is backed by a traditionally strong domestic radiopharmaceutical industry, represented by Lacomed. There is a very good PET centre in Prague, as well as a second one in neighbouring Slovakia — something that today Poland can only dream about. This centre gave a series of excellent papers on PET applications. A set of excellent clinical nuclear medicine papers was supplemented by numerous presentations on telemedicine, medical physics, radiopharmaceutics, information technology, etc. — a very important factor, testifying to the fact that Czech nuclear medicine has an excellent theoretical background. Another nice observation was the significant number of presentations not only from academic NM Departments but also from the smaller regional hospitals — something undoubtedly to be admired and followed, at least in Poland.

The organisation was excellent. The Czechs have the traditional opinion of the best-organised society and of the highest ethics of labour among the Slavic nations and this Congress was undoubtedly a confirmation of this. The author organised by himself two national Polish SNM meetings, in 1996 and 2000, therefore — remembering his own experiences — he appreciated even more the hard work of the Organising Committee, headed by Dr Jiri Bakala from the Bata Hospital in Zlin. This is even more to be appreciated as Dr Bakala did it with a really small staff. *Chapeaux bas!* The author was very impressed by the social side of this Congress. Czech food and cooking, perhaps with the exception of very good beers, are rather not the most renowned in Europe. In contrast to this opinion, the evening meetings had plenty of excellent food and — a nice and surprising discovery — very good

Czech wines. What a nice contrast with, say, the EANM Congresses, where welcome parties were usually a disaster.

One thing the author missed a little was the international aspect of this Congress, especially the one of broader regional co-operation. Apart from the traditionally huge number of guests from neighbouring Slovakia, there was only one presentation from Poland, one from Croatia, one from the USA, three from Canada. There is, however, also good news here. In talking with Czech colleagues, the author encountered great willingness to co-operate with the Nuclear Medicine Review. Czech articles were rarely to be found in the first issues of NMR-CEE, with a gradual improvement in two last issues. This recent Congress seems to open a new and a very promising perspective in this area.

Leaving Zlin full of pleasant impressions, the author had only one question unanswered. Who was Tomáš Bata? Vague news had been heard about the family of famous Bata shoes manufacturers, being also a sort of regional Rockefeller in terms of education and charitable activity — a sort of legendary man. The author would eagerly like to know more about him and his triumphant come-back after the overthrow of the Communist system in the Czech Republic.

2nd Nuclear Medicine Meeting of Northern Greece with International Participation Thessaloniki, November 2–4, 2001

The 2nd Nuclear Medicine Meeting of Northern Greece with International Participation was held in the Art Gallery Conference Hall of the Society of Macedonian Studies Building, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Why *Northern* Greece? The organisation system of Greek nuclear medicine societies is as follows: there is the Greek Society of Nuclear Medicine and Biology in Athens and the Hellenic Society of Nuclear Medicine in Thessaloniki. The names of these Societies are different. The Greek SNM and Biology is probably bigger, but the journal — the Hellenic Journal of Nuclear Medicine — is published in Thessaloniki by the Hellenic SNM of Thessaloniki. This is not a rare thing, as there exists also, for example, the Society of Breast Cancer of Northern Greece and the Radiology Society of Northern Greece.

In this way or that, nuclear medicine in Northern Greece is undoubtedly focused around Professor Philippos Grammaticos, the President of the Hellenic SNM. Prof. Grammaticos is a pillar,



Prof. C. A. Hoefnagel (lecturing) and Prof. P. Grammaticos (presiding).

a keystone, the *spiritus movens* and the G.O.M. (Grand Old Man) of regional cooperation in NM. In the sense of broadness of vision — one of the most remarkable persons in NM I have ever met.

In the above meeting, 37 presentations were presented orally, 20 of them in English by lecturers from Austria, Australia, Bulgaria, Holland, India, Iran, Poland, the USA and Yugoslavia. The especially large participation of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia underlined the strong will of the organisers to promote regional cooperation. Thessaloniki seems to be growing as an important regional, not only Greek, NM meeting point. To name only the most interesting lectures, the ones to be mostly remembered were the excellent presentations of Prof. C.A. Hoefnagel, on lymphoscintigraphy and

radionuclide therapy on neuroblastoma, and of Prof. H. Sinzinger, on samarium-153 therapy. There were stimulating and inspiring round tables on nuclear cardiology and hepatobiliary scanning. At the end of the meeting several prizes were awarded — the one I liked the most was the paper on labelling with ^{99m}Tc -Evans blue for the detection of the sentinel node, from Australia. One of the prizes was awarded to Dr M. Kostkiewicz from Poland for the prediction of late complications of coronary heart disease, a paper published in the Hellenic Journal of Nuclear Medicine. The two lectures of Prof. G. Sfakianakis — although definitely too long — could serve as excellent examples of didactic work.

There was a simultaneous translation into English of all papers.

The Northern Greece meetings, and the activity of people focused around the Hellenic SNM and Professor Grammaticos, are regional, but can serve as a pattern and model in at least two aspects. Firstly, Prof. Grammaticos moved the regional communities of allied specialists — cardiologists, radiologists, etc. — to participate in the Meeting. This is a great problem of NM, a discipline somewhat isolated. Secondly, as I underlined before, a degree of regional and international cooperation has been reached at a level I have seen probably nowhere else. I noted the absence of colleagues from neighbouring Turkey, scientifically one of the best NM communities in the area, which was perhaps related to financial conditions in their country.

An interesting excursion for the foreign participants and their accompanying members, following the magnificent traces of Macedonian kings, enabled the foreign guests to learn more about the historic background of the region and to get to know each other better.